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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 000700

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/03/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: TFH01: HONDURAN CONGRESS KEEPS AMNESTY DOOR OPEN

REF: A. TEGUCIGALPA 696

[1](#)B. TEGUCIGALPA 692

[1](#)C. TEGUCIGALPA 677

Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens, reasons 1.4 (b and d)

[1](#)1. (C) The congressional commission tasked with analyzing the amnesty element of the San Jose Agreement presented their assessment to Congress on August 3. In its report, the commission stated that Congress has the legal authority to grant amnesty for political crimes as described in the San Jose Agreement, as long as a bill is presented to Congress seeking such amnesty. The recommendation represents a positive step toward acceptance of the agreement by the de facto regime inasmuch as Congress has acknowledged it would be legal to grant amnesty, an issue which many on the commission had publicly questioned at first. This shift in position was the result of a concerted effort by the Embassy to sway opinions in favor of the Agreement.

[1](#)2. (C) When the special commission was established to study the legality of granting amnesty as part of the San Jose Agreement, the prevailing opinion of commission members was against the agreement (refs A and C). Embassy officers spoke with every member of the commission, gauging opinions and presenting the case in favor of the agreement. The Ambassador also encouraged Micheletti team negotiators Vilma Morales and Arturo Corrales (ref B) to explain the legal basis for the amnesty to the commission members.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: In the meetings with Emboff, most commission members were philosophically opposed to the concept of amnesty, and expressed legal reasons to be against it (ref C). Eventual acceptance by the commission of the legality of amnesty is a signal that they did not want to be seen as torpedoing the San Jose Agreement. Nonetheless, much work remains to build the political will to accept the agreement. The commission stopped short of outright approval of the amnesty, asserting congressional authority and noting that first it would have to be presented as a bill to the full Congress for approval. The commission also made a point of highlighting that amnesty would be for political crimes only.

LLORENS